2. Ravana: Embracing Greatness and Complexity.

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Ravana's Melodic Mastery: Exploring the Veena in His Mythology

The Veena is revered as the musical instrument of choice for sages, deities, and celestial beings. In a legendary competition between Ravana and the sage Agastya, Ravana emerged victorious, showcasing his mastery of the Veena. Even Ravana's flag bore the symbol of the Veena, highlighting its significance in his story. An amusing anecdote tells of a conversation between the Miruthangam and the Veena, where the Miruthangam jests about the Veena's popularity despite its fragility. In response, the Veena expresses its sensitivity to insults, preferring to remain the center of attention in musical performances despite the risk of damage.

Ravana's Self-Fashioned Armor:

Ravana, known for his prowess in battle, engaged in combat with various opponents, including mighty animals like elephants. When elephants struck him with their tusks, causing them to break off and embed into his body, Ravana would extract these fragments himself. These horn fragments were scattered across his body, resembling the scales of a protective armor. Ravana then enlisted the help of a skilled goldsmith to fashion these horn pieces into intricate designs, creating a unique and formidable armor akin to the mythical armor worn by warriors. This armor, composed of the melded gold and horn fragments, served as a symbol of Ravana's strength and resilience in battle.

Ravana's Tenfold Mastery:
Ravana is not associated with ten faces, but rather with ten arts, including music, dance, medicine, science, politics, management, psychology, literature, astrology, and astronomy.

In this list, Ravana showed a particular passion for music, astrology, and medicine. He wielded the Veena to influence events around him, even using it to control rainfall. His expertise in medicine is still revered today, with many in Sri Lanka following his treatments. He specialized in nerve treatments and authored two notable books on the subject. During an epidemic affecting children in Lanka, Ravana introduced a medicine called Ravana Mantra, which proved effective in curing the illness. It is said that even the Yeman had to seek Ravana's permission to enter Lanka.

The books about Ravana's medicines include:

- Udal Coor Nool
- Malai Vagadam
- Maadar Maruthuvam
- Ravana 12000
- Naadi En Vagai Parisothai Nool
- Ravana Vaithiya Chintamani
- Ravana Marunthugal 12000
- Ramanan Noi Nidhanam: 72,000
- Raavanan Kiyanangal: 7,000
- Raavanan Valai Vagadam: 40,000
- Raavanan Varma Adhinul
- Varma Thiravukol Noolgal
- Yalpanam Mooligai Agarathi
- YalPaanam Podhu Agarathi
- Periya Mata Vagadam
- Nachu Maruthuvam
- Agala Marana Nool
- Udal Tholi Nool
- Tathuva Vilakkka Nool
- Raavanan Podhu Maruthuvam
- Raavanan Sugathara Maruthuvam
- Raavanan Theera Vagthen Nool – Arga Prakasam
- Raavanan Aruvai Maruthuvam 6000
- Raavanan Porutpanbu Nool
- Panda Puthayal Muraigal 600
- Raavanan Vhilai Vagadam
- Raavanan Melukku Vagadam

In astrology, it is foretold that Ravana will die in battle. While some believe warriors fought for Sita, the reality is they fought for Ravana's sister, Surpanakha. Comparatively, the Veena and Ravana share sensitivity to insults, unyielding in their pursuit of desires

regardless of consequences.

Lanka, ruled by Ravana, was a city enclosed by towering walls, adorned with lush greenery. Even the sun dared not illuminate its lands without Ravana's permission, ensuring its inhabitants remained untouched by its rays. Storms were likewise barred from entering, allowing only gentle breezes to caress the land. Every corner of Lanka was safeguarded by moats, ensuring tranquility even for the most troubled minds. Within its boundaries, people lived harmoniously amidst a rich tapestry of music, culture, and song.

Sita's Abduction: Ravana's Ego-Driven Decision

In this part of the story, Surpanakha's tears moved Ravana, despite his awareness of her manipulative nature. She cunningly described Sita's beauty and the injuries by men she sustained while being carried sita, arousing Ravana's interest. Disguised as a sage, Ravana approached Sita and inquired about her presence in the forest. Sita, without mentioning her marriage to Rama, introduced herself as the daughter of Janaka, emphasizing her bravery. This omission intrigued Ravana, suggesting Sita's possible disinterest in her marital life. However, when Sita mentioned Rama's imminent destruction of Ravana, it wounded Ravana's ego. In a fit of ego-driven anger, Ravana challenged to kill him by Rama and forcefully abducted Sita.

There was a curse on Ravana that his head would explode if he touched any woman without her consent. Despite this curse, he abducted Sita from the hut where she resided and took her to Lanka. The rationale behind this is rooted in ancient traditions, where kings would take valuables as a symbol of challenge before engaging in war. Ravana adhered to this practice, viewing it as a legitimate way to provoke conflict. While traveling, Sita strategically left her jewelry in places where she believed Rama would find them and come to her rescue. When Rama and Lakshmana discovered the vanished hut and a crown with ten heads, they realized that something extraordinary had occurred at the hands of Ravana. Lakshmana was convinced of foul play, prompting Rama to embark on a mission to confront Ravana and rescue Sita.

The Dilemma of Love and Loyalty: Ravana's Confinement of Sita

The search for Sita commenced, and Ravana confined her to Ashoka Vana. Despite his power, Ravana treated her with utmost gentleness and respect, assigning his kin's women to protect and serve her. Ravana's love for Sita rivaled the bond between Sita and Rama. For nearly ten months, akin to a woman carrying a child, Ravana carried Sita in Ashoka Vana, never laying a hand on her but kneeling before her daily, pleading for her acceptance. However, Sita remained steadfast, unwavering in her loyalty to Rama. Only Kumbhakarna dared to confront Ravana face to face, earning the moniker of the "sleeping man" for his dormant state, yet proving formidable once awakened, ensuring victory in battles. When Kumbhakarna questioned Ravana about Sita and his actions, Ravana, fueled by his pride and love for Sita, refused to answer and demanded his loyalty. At a council meeting, Vibhishana criticized Ravana's actions regarding Sita, prompting Ravana to expel him from Lanka. Subsequently, Vibhishana allied with Rama to overthrow Ravana.

The Tale of Vali: Friendship Amidst War

Vali, renowned as a formidable warrior, held sway as the ruler of Kishkindha and the Vanara kingdom. Unaware of Ravana's existence, Vali engaged in battle with him, employing all manner of weapons against each other. After achieving a stalemate in their contest of strength, Vali embarked on a period of meditation. Upon emerging, he sought to identify his opponent, and upon learning the truth, both he and Ravana were filled with joy. Vali possessed a divine blessing that allowed him to absorb half of his opponent's strength during combat. Despite this knowledge, Ravana still chose to engage Vali in battle. Impressed by Ravana's courage, Vali extended his respect, and the two adversaries ultimately forged a bond of friendship.

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